the strength of the popular prejudice against compulsory rationing, and decided to approach it—as had previously been done with compulsory service—along the line of first exhausting the possibilities of voluntary control. As a matter of fact the representatives of Labour in the Government warned us emphatically that the workers would not at that time submit to a compulsory rationing system, and we properly gave due weight to this expert advice.

Labour and rationing

But detailed rationing of the ultimate consumer was by no means the only way in which control could be exercised. On 14th December, 1916, Lord Devonport stated in the House of Lords that he would take steps, not only to maintain our food supplies, but to ensure that they should be fairly distributed, and with this end in view, would begin by finding out from statistical returns what stocks there were available, with a view to their fair distribution. This he proceeded to do without delay. Meantime, in mid-December, an order was issued through the Board of Trade, which limited meals in clubs, hotels, and other public eating places, to three courses between 6 p.m. and 9.30 p.m. and to two courses at other times, and fixed maximum prices for meals served to soldiers in all licensed premises in London.

Lord take^action

On 11th January, 1917, the Food

Controller issued six Orders—the first batch of a long series of such Orders issued from time to time in the course of the next two years. To illustrate the nature of the restrictions that were imposed, the purport of some of these Orders may be summarised as follows :—

First Orders

Ministry